

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraphs 71 and 72 with the following rewritten paragraph. The amendments are well supported by the specification. See fig. 6, ref. 614, 616.

[0071] In one embodiment, the client backup proximity parameter 614 may indicate a geographical limitation, such as a minimum or maximum distance, between the source client and the target clients on which the backup data is stored. In another embodiment, the client packet proximity parameter 616 may indicate a minimum or maximum distance between several target clients on which the backup data is stored. In this way, the client backup parameters 614 and packet proximity parameters 616 ensure that the accessibility of one packet may be substantially independent of the accessibility of a disparate data packet. For example, a source client may request that backup data be stored in target clients that are not in the same metropolitan area, state, or even nation as the source client by adjusting the client backup proximity parameter 614 accordingly.

[0072] The client backup parameters 614 and packet proximity parameters 616 may indicate, in one embodiment, a physical distance, such as miles or kilometers. The distance between nodes 104-110 may be calculated or estimated, for instance, using global positioning system (GPS) coordinates. In an alternative embodiment, the client backup parameters 614 and packet proximity parameters 616 may indicate a logical distance. For example, the client backup parameters 614 and packet proximity parameters 616 may reference the internet protocol (IP) address of the source client and specify that the backup packets be stored on target clients within a different network or subnet. In a further embodiment, the client backup parameters 614 and packet proximity parameters 616 may inclusively or exclusively specify certain nodes 104-110 on which to store or not to store the backup data packets.